

# President Taft's Administration Strong; On the Defensive Nearly Entire Term

When Factional Differences Are Forgotten, However, He Will Hold a High Place in History as a Constructive, Patriotic Chief Executive—Tariff Was the First Rock Struck by Ship and the Last—Pet Feature, the Commerce Court, Unpopular from the Start.

By JOSEPH P. ANNIN.

William Howard Taft, twenty-seventh President of the United States, yesterday yielded the responsibilities of that office to Woodrow Wilson, of New Jersey. Mr. Taft retired to the dim-shaded walks and drives of his alma mater at New Haven as a member of the faculty.

Whatever contemporary comment upon his administration may hold, regardless of his overwhelming defeat at the hands of the electorate last November, Mr. Taft's loyal friends—and they are legion—declare that when the present factional differences and personal feuds have been boiled down by time to their true degree of materiality and significance, his four-year tenure as Chief Executive will hold a high place among constructive, patriotic administrations.

Mr. Taft's was a stormy administration. That his successor will have no less stormy a stay in the White House few doubt. Mr. Taft's administration began at the crest of the Republican wave. His misfortune was that he refused to leave that crest as the wave reached the beach. His fate was that of any object at the top of a breaking comb.

Whether it was in his power to change the onrushing wave to a gentle swell and save the party from the crash is a question which only history and the hindsight of future generations fairly can decide.

**Leaves at Critical Stage.**

Mr. Taft left the White House at a critical stage. Mr. Wilson falls heir to burdens from which any man will shrink. It is fortunate for the new President that he will have nearly a month without interference from the other coordinate branches of the government to set his face. Mexico looms up, a gruesome shade, involving at once the entire international policy of this country, involving the Monroe doctrine and "dollar diplomacy," the latter distinctly a Taft policy.

The Taft bark has ridden upon a sea of political unrest to such an extent that Taft politics and Congress cannot easily be dissociated the one from the other in a review of the last four years.

President Taft's first year, the one before the public from February 12, 1908, less than one year after his inauguration, until his last public utterance as a President. His first year, when he began to defend the already generally attacked Republican program, and since then, with or without reason, he has been called upon to fight with his back to the wall for every policy of the White House and every blunder of the Republican party. He has defended the Payne-Aldrich tariff bill, which lost him his election one year after it was passed; he defended his first Secretary of the Interior, Richard Achilles Ballinger, and, indirectly, Solicitor General E. A. Tamm, the Department of Agriculture, thereby alienating, respectively, the conservation progressives, who were lined up solidly behind Gifford Pinchot against Ballinger, and the pure food enthusiasts, also largely progressives, who were equally solid in their support of Dr. Harvey W. Wiley. He defended the trust policy pursued by his Attorney General.

He defended the Commerce Court, his own creation, which, having placed itself in a hostile attitude toward the Interstate Commerce Commission, could expect to find few friends or supporters among the people. He was even placed, by his enemies, in the unenviable position of defending Lorimer, of which office he had been a member, against charges of fraud and bribery, which he certainly was not guilty of.

**Alienated Progressives.**

But, worst of all, from the standpoint of a politician aspiring for further re-election at the hands of the voters, he defended popular representative government against popular representative government at a time when popular government, to the ultimate degree possible under the Constitution, is the demand of an overwhelming majority of the voters of this country. Thereby he finally alienated the Progressive support more irrevocably than any definite hostility toward Roosevelt or any leading Progressive could have done. His sincere responsiveness to political nostrums, political nostrums, and so on added fuel to the flames of resentment, but the damage was done when it was definitely seen that Mr. Taft was adverse to anything approaching an elastic construction of the Constitution and progressiveness which tended toward popular rather than rigid representative government. This attitude of President Taft was typical of the conservative element—not the reactionary—in his party, and was temperamental with the President. Being a man whose sincerity of purpose could not be doubted, it should have caused no surprise, because to him popular government measures appeared to be political nostrums, and therefore it was his duty to tell the people what he thought of them. Some people have called this lack of tact; others ascribe it to honesty of purpose and absence of hypocrisy. But as the reactionaries felt as the President in the public mind the President felt as the reactionaries did, and was tarred by the same stick, ultimately he himself threw to the winds any distinction as far as the public could gauge, and tossed his fortunes in with Barnes et al., and in the minds of the great mass of the people the President ran as a reactionary Republican, while in reality he was and has been a progressive-conservative, paradoxical as that term may sound.

**Friend of Civil Service.**

President Taft's administration contained much of appeal to the business world; that is, in the small or ordinary business man. He constantly urged more general participation in politics on the business man. He outlined the National Road of Trade and the Chamber of Commerce of the United States. He did more than any of his predecessors, bar none, to install business methods into the government executive departments. It must be remembered that under his administration the Post-office Department was able to show for the first time in years a surplus rather than a deficit. He proved himself one of the best friends the civil service has had, and was called upon time after time, particularly during the last two years of his administration, to defend that institution. And he defended it last summer, even when it became necessary to veto the vitally important legislative, executive, and judicial appropriation bill because it contained a clause viciously hostile to the civil service system. By executive order he placed 8,000 assistant postmasters under the protection of the service, and in the closing year of his administration extended the protection of the civil service to the remaining fourth class postmasters, some 25,000 in number. He further extended it to certain parts of the customs service.

The business feature of Mr. Taft's administration naturally was overlooked in the bitter factional fight of which he was the center. It was not stressed by his enemies, and had not enough of the dramatic appeal

required of winning political issues to be stressed by his friends. But the President paved the way to what inevitably must come—business methods in government administration. Immediately after his inauguration in 1908 he appointed a budget committee of his Cabinet, with a view to reducing and equalizing public expenditures in the executive department. He required of his Cabinet officers that they appoint and direct economy and efficiency boards in their several departments, with a view to improvement and economy.

**His Economy Commission.**

Virtually all of Mr. Taft's efforts toward economy and efficiency met with strong, if not always open, opposition from Congress. Mr. Taft, looking through the eyes of a business man, rather than of a politician, saw and early called attention to the utter absurdity and inequity of the present system of apportioning appropriations, where an entire membership of Congress appropriates almost at will and then blames the Executive for extravagance. After a strenuous fight, Mr. Taft was able to obtain appropriation for an economy commission, composed of experts, with Dr. Frederick A. Cleveland at the head. This commission started in to work out a logical system of government administration, entirely dissociated from political exigencies. Its work was so entirely satisfactory that the Democratic House continued it. Besides going through the department and pointing out poor business methods, useless bureaus, idle and helpless employees, and other abuses which no sane business man would tolerate for an instant in his own establishment, the commission worked out a logical budget plan of appropriations. The highest possible approval of this plan is found in the present acknowledgment of Democratic leaders in the House that they must adopt some such system to prevent further extravagance. The Democrats in the House are now planning a budget committee which will work, to a certain extent, in conjunction with an executive Cabinet budget committee in an effort to prevent a continuation of the extravagances which the Sixty-second Congress was guilty of.

Although he has not satisfied the extremists in respect to conservation, President Taft has been vigilant in protecting the public. Almost no conservation policy imaginable would be entirely satisfactory to radical conservationists after the policy adopted and carried through by President Roosevelt, but Mr. Taft has proven himself repeatedly a friend of conservation and a conservative. In the Forestry Reserve, following the unfortunate removal of Gifford Pinchot, Mr. Taft placed a man who has vindicated his appointment in every way—Hester S. Graves. Following the tardy resignation of Secretary Ballinger in March, 1911, Mr. Taft called to the Interior portfolio a lawyer and conservation expert whose appointment met with universal approval—Walter L. Fisher, of Chicago. Mr. Taft, while the Ballinger-Pinchot controversy was at its height, ordered the withdrawal of the Alaska land and 25,000,000 acres of Western coal lands.

**Conservation Fight Continued.**

Mr. Taft continued his fight for conservation against the reactionary elements of both parties in Congress almost up to the day he retired from office. During the Sixty-second Congress he outlined and defended with the veto power a water-power conservation plan which resulted in the saving, for the time being at least, of millions upon millions of dollars' worth of valuable water power concessions. This policy brought the Democrats to the front with the dried-up State's right doctrine, the only breakwater behind which special privilege can now seek shelter, and which the President denied special privilege during his administration.

Mr. Taft refused to permit private corporations to usurp dam sites in various localities and obtain a perpetual hold upon the water privileges resulting, without reserving to the Federal government some measure of remuneration and some means of protecting the people who would be dependent upon the utilities operated by this water power for their water, light, and transportation facilities from exorbitant rates. The result of Mr. Taft's firm stand in this respect was that the Senate Committee on Commerce reported out a water-power bill modeled upon lines suggested by the President. The reactionaries of both parties in the Senate cut most of the good out of the bill and sent it over to the House. It was referred to the Senate Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce, headed by Judge Adamson, of Georgia, a pronounced reactionary and an ardent States rights man. Judge Adamson immediately announced that as far as he was concerned the bill could lie there forever. The reactionary wing of Democrats are banking upon Woodrow Wilson to restore to them their States rights, prevent Federal regulation, knock conservation railways out, and sign away the resources which otherwise would be reserved for coming generations without deprivation of the present generation.

**Defends Sherman Law.**

Mr. Taft has been called upon to defend not so much his own trust record as the Sherman anti-trust law. He believes this law is an effective curber of monopoly. He refuses to agree with George W. Perkins, Bull Moose angel, ex-Morgan partner, organizer of the Harvey Trust insurance king, et al., that monopoly has gone beyond the reach of the statutes, that the best thing to do is to recognize and condone existing conditions, draw off from attacks upon the utility of water in stocks of big corporations, and "regulate" them so as to prevent further overcapitalization and monopoly.

The greatest criticism of Mr. Taft's trust record is the failure to obtain convictions that will stand under the criminal clause of the Sherman law. Mr. Taft believes this clause should be strengthened, but he is not willing to discard either the whole clause or the entire statute.

A prominent Democrat and a great lawyer was mentioned as a possible successor to the General under Wilson. He thanked his friends for the compliment and concluded, "Gentlemen, I could not fill the shoes of the incumbent."

Mr. Taft's "trust record" must be said to include the prosecution and conviction with wholesale reimbursements, of the Sugar Trust officials responsible for the weighing frauds at the New York custom house; action looking to the dissolution of the Steel Trust; a half victory before the United States Supreme Court in the prosecution of the Anthracite Coal Trust; the government suit against the tobacco trust by a decree of the United States Supreme Court; conviction and fines for Wire Trust officials; action against the Wall Paper Trust; the ineffective dissolution of the Standard Oil Company by order of the United States Supreme Court; action against the Aluminum Trust and the United Shoe Machinery Company; heavy fines and jail sentences procured before a Federal court in Ohio against twenty-nine officers and directors of the Standard Oil Company; the successful prosecution under the criminal clause of the Sherman law of the Beef Trust officials.

**Criticized Tariff Attitude.**

President Taft's tariff attitude, which started the snowball of discontent which ultimately developed into a political avalanche, has been vacillating in the extreme, and has laid him open to serious charges of lack of sincerity in this respect.

The Republicans renewed their lease on power in 1908 largely on what was believed to be a strong, downward revision tariff plank. Immediately after his election he called a special session of Congress to redeem the tariff plank in the platform. Representative Warren Payne, of New York, chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, and Senator Nelson W. Aldrich of Rhode Island, gave the name to the new bill, an omnibus measure, which was passed in both houses by the weight of the "organization," and which in many respects was a vicious repudiation of the party pledge. Schedule K, the wool and woollen schedule, was attacked most vigorously, and at one time, after he had signed the bill, was characterized by President Taft himself as indefensible. This revision bill was put through after Taft in July of that year had served notice that he expected a downward revision. But the President signed it, supposedly because he believed that it was better than no bill at all.

The Payne-Aldrich bill was the object of general attack from the date of its appearance in the House. It was purely a committee measure, the personal interests represented by powerful lobbies were given every possible opportunity to obtain protection, and which was characterized in its passage through both houses by outrageous log-rolling and trading.

Following the passage of the Payne-Aldrich bill, August 5, 1909, with the tariff commission, Mr. Taft appointed the tariff commission, the personnel and purpose of which was above criticism. Then he started in to defend the new bill. It was "The best tariff bill we have had" when he signed it that summer. When he was launched on his 12,000-mile trip through the West and South, which began September 15 and concluded November 16, 1909, he quickly learned of the disastrous effects of the bill. Then he urged the country to await reports from his tariff commission, a wait of approximately two years before the report on the first schedule could be expected.

**Announces Reciprocity Plan.**

In September of the following year Mr. Taft announced that reciprocity negotiations would begin with Canada in October. In November the Democrats came into power in the House because of the Payne-Aldrich tariff bill. At the conclusion of the short session following, Mr. Taft called the Sixty-third Congress into extraordinary session to frame a reciprocity measure, which was passed and rejected by Canada that fall. During the extra session the Underwood Ways and Means Committee, headed by Mr. Taft, despite the "indefensible" features of the Payne-Aldrich bill, gave it to be understood that he would not approve any tariff bill pending the report of the tariff commission. Two bills were sent to the White House and were vetoed—the cotton and wool bills, both of which had been passed in the Senate with the aid of progressive Republicans, and which they amended.

Particularly was the President criticized for his veto of the wool bill, which veto, in the last few days of his term, the Underwood-La Follette bill called for a valiant instead of specific duties. The President intimated that if the minority bill of the Ways and Means Committee, headed by Mr. Taft, were passed, the tariff board of Connecticut, with the advice of the tariff commission, should be substituted, he would sign it. The Hill bill called for specific duties and a tariff board of the tariff board. Before it was presented, however, Mr. Hill was forced to make certain arbitrary increases in duties on raw wool by his Republican friends. The Ways and Means Committee, so that it was presented to the House it carried a greater measure of protection than the Underwood-La Follette compromise bill, which the President vetoed. The Underwood-La Follette bill carried almost exactly the same measure of protection as the Hill bill did when it came from the President's tariff board and before the high protectionists forced Mr. Hill to arbitrarily add several cents a pound to the duty on raw wool. The wool bill was vetoed August 17, and the veto was sustained by a two-thirds vote in the House on the following day. The tariff board report on the wool schedule did not come out until December 30.

If President Taft had no other feature of his administration to look back upon with complete satisfaction, say those who know him most intimately, he would feel amply compensated for four years of attacks and, at present, the appreciated effort because of the hand he has had in building up a strong Federal Judiciary, and in the fact that his work in the tariff board has been for itself general and favorable recognition.

Of the nine members of the United States Supreme Court, four are Taft appointees, involving the elevation in December, 1910, of Charles E. Hughes, Justice, Edward Douglas White, to succeed the late Chief Justice Melville W. Fuller. The new members and the dates of their appointments are Associate Justices Horace Harmon Lurton, Democrat, January 2, 1910; Charles E. Hughes, Republican, May 2, 1910; Willis Van Devanter, Republican, December 16, 1910; Joseph McKenna, Democrat, to fill the vacancy created by the death of Chief Justice Fuller, February 19, 1912. The deaths in the Supreme Court during Mr. Taft's administration were Chief Justice Fuller, and Associate Justices John Marshall Harlan, David Josiah Brewer, and Rufus W. Peckham. Associate Justice William Henry Moody resigned because of ill health in November, 1910.

The Supreme Court, as now constituted, has vindicated completely every one of Mr. Taft's appointments, many of which were bitterly attacked at first. It is considered an exceptionally able and sagacious body of constitutional lawyers, even for a United States Supreme Court. Mr. Taft is a lawyer of highest standing in his profession, and has not only given up an almost certain appointment to the Supreme bench to enter the White House. In view of the general attacks from certain quarters of the constitution and the judiciary in general, President Taft was particularly desirous of doing everything in his power to perpetuate through his appointments to the Supreme bench the Constitution as he views it.

## PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT OF NATION.



WOODROW WILSON.

THOMAS R. MARSHALL.

### WEDDING BELLS ARE TO TINKLE!

That Is, There Are Three Attractive and Accomplished Girls in White House.

AND WHO CAN TELL?

Miss Monroe, the First Daughter of a President, Married in Executive Mansion.

The coming of a new administration causes renewed interest in the Capital City, and, naturally, it will focus around White House social life, as well as its politics. What a possibility now opens for weddings and brides, with three attractive girls in the Executive Mansion! The first bride of the White House was Mrs. Lucy Payne, the widow of a nephew of George Washington. She was the youngest sister of Mrs. Madison, then mistress of the White House, and, although no special chronicle remains of the wedding, we may picture it as taking place with the graceful stateliness which characterized the days of 1812. A little later Mrs. Madison was again hostess at another wedding. On this occasion her cousin, Miss Anna Todd, was the first bride to be married in what is now known as the East Room.

**Monroe Wedding.**

Miss Maria Monroe was the first daughter of a President to be married at the White House. Her wedding took place last week when her father, James Monroe, was in office. Following this wedding, Miss Mary Hellen was married, in 1828, to John Adams, a son of President John Quincy Adams. This was a gay wedding, and the White House walls resounded to music as the guests joined in the dances of the period, which probably did not include anything suggestive of the "twentieth century" turkey trot.

After five years the White House again saw bridal wreaths, as, during President Andrew Jackson's administration, there were three weddings—Miss Letitia Neville, Texas, to a member of the French Legation, Alphonse Joseph Yver; Miss Mary Easton, a niece of Mrs. Jackson, to Louis B. Polk; and Miss Emily Martin, a relative of the President, to Lewis Randolph, of the famous Roanoke family. Miss Elizabeth Tyler, daughter of President Tyler, in 1842 married William Waller, a relative of the President, to Lewis Randolph, of the famous Roanoke family. Miss Elizabeth Tyler, daughter of President Tyler, in 1842 married William Waller, a relative of the President, to Lewis Randolph, of the famous Roanoke family.

From 1822 to 1874 was a long and fateful interval, for during that period was fought the civil war, and the well-bred daughters of the great general, Ulysses S. Grant, Miss Ellen Wrenshall Grant, was the next bride to grace the historic mansion. She was married in the East Room, to Algeron C. F. Barlow, an Englishman of distinguished family. That "Nellie" Grant was loved and admired across the water proves that international marriages are often happy ones.

**Miss Fulson's Wedding.**

The next bride of the White House was Miss Frances Fulson, who came to Washington for the marriage, in June, 1898, and the bridegroom was Grover Cleveland, President of the United States. She was the most beautiful bride who ever stood in the Blue Room, and to those who attended the ceremony the wedding will ever be a delightful memory.

As bride and wife, Mrs. Cleveland, Jean Woodrow, and Eleanor Randolph Wilson are extremely clever and accomplished.

The fourth and last White House bride was Miss Alice Roosevelt, daughter of President Theodore Roosevelt, who married in the East Room, in February, 1906. Her parents were the most magnificent ever received by a bride outside of the Royal families of Europe. And now, with the arrival of President Wilson and his charming daughters, wedding bells many ring on three occasions, but it is said that Miss Margaret, Jean Woodrow, and Eleanor Randolph Wilson are extremely clever and accomplished.

The Wilson administration will not want for useful pets if the machinations of certain Southern Senators and Congressmen are put into effect. Most of the offers of live stock heard about the Capitol, however, run to chickens, a fact that has brought broad grins of delight to the coterie of dark cooks and kitchen maids, who are to cater to the Wilson palates during the next four years.

Chicken, Southern style: flocks of hoe cakes, are to sustain the Presidential policy, it is understood.

The number 12 played a big part in the parade. There were thirteen Governors and their staffs, militia from thirteen States, civic delegations from thirteen other States, representatives from thirteen educational institutions, and several thousand Princeton students marching thirteen abreast.

Thirteen has long been held by the President to be his lucky number, and its precautionary recurrence was due to a wish on the part of the Democrats to dissipate any curse loosed upon the March air by the Republicans.

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